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First Atlantic Craft Awards for Excellence

Department of Education and Culture (to July 99)

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The best of Atlantic Canadian craft design and industry development was honoured today at the first-ever Atlantic Canada Craft Awards for Excellence.

Also recognized at the awards were more than 45 longtime participants of the Atlantic Craft Trade Show, an annual event since 1977 bringing together leaders in the region's craft and giftware industry to promote their products to buyers from across North America.

Deputy Minister Lloyd Gillis of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture and representatives from all four Atlantic provinces were on hand to congratulate the winners.

"These awards recognize both tangible and intangible measures of success," said Mr. Gillis. "On one hand, there is the important and impressive economic impact, but on the other, there is a pride that can only be found in Atlantic Canada -- pride in the quality of the products and their design, and pride in the unique culture that is embedded in each and every item produced."

The Atlantic Canada Craft Awards for Excellence offer recognition of the leadership and superiority of professional craftspeople and strong supporters of the industry. Winners were announced in four categories.

The Prominence of Design Award is presented to the producer whose works consistently demonstrate the significance of design solution in their conception, development and production. The winner is Christopher Joyce of Halifax, a pioneer in the studio furniture movement who works with a variety of materials, including steel, wood, glass, stone and fabric. Mr. Joyce's furnishings can be found in private collections throughout the world, including in the United States, Europe, Asia, Australia and Japan.

The Outstanding Exporter Award goes to Great Northern Knitters of Charlottetown. The award recognizes an individual or organization that has been instrumental in the exporting of crafts and giftware from one or more of the Atlantic provinces outside this region. Great Northern Knitters sells one-third of its production to Japan, and is also making its mark with exports to the United States. Worn by royalty, heads of state, actors and athletes, its products feature a lifetime guarantee that boasts: "If you can ever wear a hole in it, we will give you a new one."

The Industry Leader Award has been presented to NFLD & Lab Crafts Development Association, St. John's, Nfld. This award is given to an individual or organization that has demonstrated superior leadership, excellence and compassion, and has made exceptional contributions to the industry over the past 10 years. NFLD & Lab

Crafts Development Association is a guiding force in the craft industry, a member of the advisory committee for a community college textile program, and co-author and manager of the Craft Industry Development Program, a funding program that provides support to craftspeople.

The Industry Supporter Award is presented to an individual or organization that has been instrumental in support and development of the quality crafts and giftware industry in one or more of the Atlantic provinces for three years or more. This year's winner is Adriane Abbott of Halifax, co-founder of the Studio Rally, an annual event to promote Nova Scotia's wealth of artisans and their artistic talents. Ms. Abbott has also developed the Studio Map, a guide to encourage travellers to visit and explore the artistic community.

During the Atlantic Craft Trade Show, Feb. 7-9 this year, more than 220 businesses expect to conduct $1.5 million in sales at wholesale prices to wholesalers buyers, agents, representatives and distributors in the international marketplace.

Last year's show attracted more than 1,500 buyers. Products on display include stained glass, pottery, handmade stationery, woodcrafts, pewterware, jewelry and fabrics. The Atlantic Canadian craft industry is estimated to be worth nearly $200 million annually.

The Atlantic Craft Trade Show and Awards are organized by the provincial governments of the four Atlantic provinces. In Nova Scotia, the Department of Education and Culture is partnered with Economic Development and Tourism.

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